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The Advocate Of Peace.

VOL. LVII.

BOSTON, FEBRUARY, 1895.

No. 2.

THE AMERICAN PEACE SOCIETY,
PUBLISHERS,
NO. 3 SOMERSET STREET, BOSTON, MASS.

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MODERN BRUTALITY.

BY REV. GEORGE F. MAGOUN, D. D.

Instead of any refining away of brutal treatment of man by man under modern civilization there seems just now to be an increase of it. In some quarters this is fearful. One needs only to read the daily press dispatches for a few days to discover it. The contention is easily made, indeed, that there have been as many instances within any given time heretofore, only not reported. Of necessity this can never be decided, for we cannot know how many cases have formerly occurred unreported. But this does not touch the *comparative measure* of brutality in those days and in ours. We do not need to know the number of them in order to see the comparative inhumanity. Could the bloody outrages upon slaves before emancipation have been more savage than those which free negroes suffer now?

There is certainly an ingenuity of cruelty, a diversity of novel methods of outraging human happiness and destroying health and life, altogether unprecedented. We know perfectly well the character of these in former times. And we not only are now aware that our civilization furnishes means by which man can prey on man till now undevised or undiscovered, but also that every sort of means, new and old, is now employed to this end. Note, for instance, as to murder and suicide, especially when perpetrated together, a quite modern infamy. How horribly various, and marked by incidents and circumstances how startling and till now unimaginable, are these two barbarisms alone. How absurd the assertion would be that reverence for human life in any sense increases, even in refined circles! But no less ingenious and "advanced" are current frauds and robberies, often involving for success reckless brutality to persons whose property is taken away. There is an infernal ingenuity of injury carried to the utmost extremes. Scoundrels and criminals of the past could not so much as imagine how many of these iniquities are now committed in the very centres of our polite society. They are brought about by nineteenth century improvements of all sorts, ever so recent, especially those so extolled in the physical sciences and the useful arts. Chemistry alone is proven every day an immense instrument of brutality.

Just now all Christian and humane society is shocked and horrified by the barbarity which gives evil distinction to college athletic contests. The risk of life and limb is such that every "team"—a barbarous word to designate a band of young men—must have its attendant surgeon. Foot ball is not a common American game; it is specially collegiate. That one prize fighter at the North was killed outright the other day and the next week another at New Orleans, in sight of twenty-five hundred spectators, surprises no one. But college "contests" are those of undergraduates, supposed to be imbibing the finest influences of an intellectual and moral civilization. If these cannot refine young men beyond the disgusting and repulsive grossness of Greek athletes and Roman gladiators, what have we that can? Evangelical religion? But who has not noticed the effort to identify this with popular athletics, spite of their notorious abuses? Sober human belief is sufficiently strained by the assertion of

devotees of the sports that high and minute scholarship is not diminished by the time, excitement and extreme energy turned away from them. When we are also challenged by the assertion that an exalted and characteristically spiritual Christian life does not suffer either, it is quite too much. The first followers of our Lord could not combine spirituality with heathen games; shall we succeed any better with our "barbarics"? But all this shows how deep and powerful is the hold brutalism still has upon human nature. The corruption of primitive Christianity by union with Greek speculation did not more clearly show the grip of "philosophy and vain deceit" and how "profane babblings and oppositions of the knowledge falsely so called" had the ear of the thoughtful in those ages.

Then take the public barbarities of war. It is even argued that they are so much greater than before our day, and death in battle so much more sure and terrible, that international conflicts are, or are going to be, discouraged and forestalled! Who sees any real signs of this? When have reports of casualties indescribable, awful wounds, and deaths of horror on the field and in military hospitals produced any such effect upon the men who decide that nations shall go to war! But even if it were so, the increasing military facilities for mangling and murdering our fellow creatures would be the same fearful proofs of modern brutality. Statesmen and the heads of war departments in Christian nations know all about these; do they prevent, do they even seek to avoid, international strife on their account! Newly invented arms and other means of slaughter obtained by one government are indeed relied upon by their possessors to discourage other powers from risking conflict with them; and the former use all means to prevent the latter from obtaining equally effectual instruments of destruction. But what nation in mercy hesitates to go to war with a less powerful one because this has them not? Are the warriors of today any less savage and murderous than those of long ago, in detail? It certainly could not be proved by the late Armenian outrages in Turkey, or by the incidents of the war between Japan and China! Or, to go a little farther back, would any student of history undertake to prove the growing humaneness of *American* armies and commanders by a comparison of the quality of suffering—quantity not to be taken into account—in our Rebellion and that in our Revolutionary War? Is there even any lack of estimating our soldiery—regulars or volunteers—by their desperate "fighting qualities"? Is it not the belligerent who is the most reckless of the amount or kind of butchery,—be it man or nation—that receives the highest and widest applause? Are not leading nations yet ranked among their fellows by their power and facility for bloodshed? the basest distinction any people can have.

Grinnell, Iowa, Dec. 29, 1894.

THE ECONOMIC WASTES OF WAR.

BY HENRY SALANT.

First Prize.

I purpose to tell in this essay of the manifold ways in which war retards the economic progress of a nation.

Ever since the invention of gunpowder, and the introduction of the modern weapons of warfare the destructive effects of war upon wealth, industry and commerce, have far transcended those of the catastrophes of famine and flood.

Since then, the civilized nations of the world have been demoralized by large standing armies. These armies are composed of carefully selected men, who do nothing but train for war. In this way men endowed with physical health and strength, men capable of becoming producers to a very high degree are rendered absolutely useless; and a very large portion of the produce of the land and labor is employed in maintaining these vast armies of non-producers.

Besides the money expended for the support of the vast armies, larger amounts are laid out in the purchase of arms and ammunition. Nor does this form an insignificant portion of the aggregate war expenditure of a nation. The arms of the present day are manufactured with a view to perfect precision. Not only has the science of attack in war but also that of defence made great progress and become more complex.

The enormous cost of maintaining the machinery of defence is the great notable characteristic of modern society. But, had not the maintenance of these armies and navies, and the purchase of "dead" stock—men of war, fire-arms, ammunition, etc.—given this particular direction to so great an amount of capital, it would have naturally been used in maintaining producers, whose labor would have replaced, with gain, the whole cost of their support. The annual produce of the land and labor of the country would have been increased, and every year's increment would have helped to augment that of the following year. It has been calculated that the cost of war in Europe from 1853 to 1866 was 1,913,000,000 pounds and the annual charges incurred by the armed forces amounted to 150,000,000 pounds. It needs but an exercise of the imagination to realize the amount of productive capital that would have been brought into use, if these vast armies of vigorous and able-bodied men had been put to work upon raw material purchased by these millions upon millions of pounds. More houses would have been built, more lands would have been improved, more manufactures would have been introduced and extended. In fact, it would require careful thought to contemplate the height to which the prosperity of Europe might have been raised. To defray the enormous expense of maintaining the land and naval forces, the governments of the different countries over-burden their people with taxation.